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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action, all 17 claims were rejected. In particular, Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,434,804 to Cornet et al. ("Cornet"). The remaining claims (Claims 1-9 and 11-17) were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over various combinations of Cornet and U.S. Patents Nos. 6,446,406 to Sauer ("Sauer"); 264,641 to Dunks et al. ("Dunks") and 87,273 to Martin ("Martin").

Independent Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cornet in view of Sauer. Independent Claim 1 describes a pair of first rails having an L-shaped cross-section that insert into L-shaped openings in a pair of second rails so as to interconnect the rails into a rectangular frame.

Cornet discloses a casket bed 20 which includes a rectangular bed frame 22 having pair of side rails 24 and a pair of end rails 26, as shown in Figures 2-4. A pair of cross-braces 28 extend between the side rails and a plurality of bed straps 30 extend between the end rails. As is shown in Figure 4, ends 36 of the cross-braces are turned down into a U-shape to extend over the L-shaped side rails. As is shown in Figure 3, one of the end rails includes integrally formed tangs 56 over which are placed holes 54 in the bed strap ends.

Cornet fails to teach or disclose interconnection of rails using L-shaped openings. Cornet shows the rails as being interconnected using a tongue 86 that extends upwards from a supporting horizontal leg 32 of each rail and extends over the horizontal leg of the adjacent one of the rails. Extending over the outer surface of the vertical leg 34 of the adjacent rail is an upturned end portion 88 which cooperates with the tongue to hold the rails together, as shown in Figure 3 of Cornet. Therefore, neither of the rails defines an opening for interconnection, much less an L-shaped opening.

Without the L-shaped openings described in Claim 1, the side rails of Cornet can rotate with respect to, and disengage from, the end rails. Therefore, the casket bed frame of Cornet requires the use of the pair of cross-braces to hold the frame together. In the present invention as described in Claim 1, on the other hand, relative rotation of the interconnected L-shaped rails is restrained via overlapping of the bottom flanges 22 of the L-shaped rails and by the top edges of the L-shaped openings, as shown in Figure 2. Therefore, the present invention does not require

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the use of cross-braces to prevent disassembly. As a result, Cornet fails to teach or suggest interconnection using an L-shaped opening.

Sauer discloses interconnecting beams 21, 22 but the interconnecting beams are not L-shaped and do not define L-shaped openings, as shown in Figures 6, 7 and 8. The beams are interconnected via slots 51, but the slots are T-shaped, not L-shaped as in the present invention. Therefore, Sauer does not overcome Cornet's failure to teach or suggest interconnection using an L-shaped opening.

None of the other cited references overcomes Cornet's failure to teach or suggest interconnection using an L-shaped opening. Martin teaches the use of dovetail blocks B to interconnect rails, as shown in Figure 2. Dunks discloses interconnection of rails using brackets B, as shown in Figure 1. As a result, the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Cornet in view of Sauer has been overcome and Claim 1 should be allowable.

Independent Claims 7 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over various combinations of Cornet, Sauer, Martin and Dunks. Independent Claim 15 describes a method that includes engaging L-shaped ends of rails into L-shaped openings to form a rectangular frame and attaching a plurality of strips to the rails. Independent Claim 7 has been amended to recite first rail ends having an L-shaped cross-section and second rails defining L-shaped openings to receive the first rail ends. As described above, Cornet, Sauer, Martin and Dunks fail to teach or suggest, alone and in combination, the interlocking of rails with L-shaped ends into a frame using L-shaped openings. As a result, the rejections of Claims 7 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) have been overcome and Claims 7 and 15 should be allowable.

Independent Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cornet. Independent Claim 12 of the present application describes a plurality of elongate strips extending between a pair of rails and having corrugations. When rejecting Claim 12 over Cornet, it was alleged that it "would have been considered obvious to one skilled in the art to make the flexible member corrugated since it is well known that corrugated structures are *stronger*," at paragraph 9 of the Office Action (emphasis added).

The corrugations described in Claim 12 of the present application, however, have the benefit of increasing the *flexibility* of the elongate strips. The bed straps of Cornet, in contrast,

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are flat strips of metal that extend between the end rails and have relatively little longitudinal flexibility compared to the corrugated strips described in Claim 12. Cornet's bed straps require the use of springs 60 to allow sufficient longitudinal flexibility for attachment of the ends of the bed straps to the tangs 56 of the end rails 2, as shown in Figure 2. The corrugated strips of the present invention avoid the need for the flexibility of such springs. Therefore, Cornet fails to teach or suggest a casket bed frame assembly that includes corrugated elongate strips that are configured to extend between, and attach to, attachment sites on a pair of rails to provide flexible support.

None of the remaining cited references teach or disclose the use of elongate strips with corrugations. Martin discloses straight, flat strips D of iron in Figure 1. Dunks discloses interwoven strips I of metal wherein the strips are flat, as can be seen in Figures 5 and 6. Sauer is directed to a grid for supporting ceiling tiles and does not appear to have any supporting strips or straps, much less elongated strips with corrugations. As result, the rejection of Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Cornet has been overcome and Claim 12 should be allowable.

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Cornet. Claim 10 has been amended to recite a plurality of elongate flexible members each having a plurality of corrugations. As described above, neither Cornet, nor the remaining cited references, alone and in combination, teaches or suggests a casket frame assembly including interlocking rails for supporting a plurality of elongate flexible members each having a plurality of corrugations. As a result, the rejection of Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) has been overcome and Claim 10 should be allowable.

Each of the remaining Claims 2-6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17 depends from and further patentably distinguishes one of the allowable independent Claims 1, 7, 10, 12 and 15. The rejections of Claims 2-6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) have therefore been overcome and Claims 2-6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17 should therefore be in a condition for allowance.

In view of the remarks and amendments presented above, it is respectfully submitted that claims of the present application are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued in due course. The Examiner is requested to contact Applicants'

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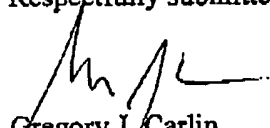
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undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

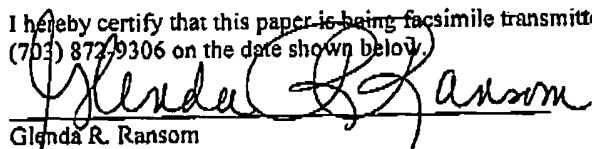
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CLT01/4626970v1

1/12/2004
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